

A new subspecies of *Xiphocolaptes major* (Vieillot) from Argentina

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Xiphocolaptes major (Vieillot) is a large dendrocolaptid (>90 g) with a distribution that includes Brazil in Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul, northern and eastern Bolivia, and Argentina from Jujuy to Córdoba and Santa Fé (Meyer de Schauensee 1970). There are three recognised subspecies (Peters 1951): *X. m. remoratus* Pinto, known only from the type locality, Fazenda Aricá-mirim, on the banks of the lower rio Aricá, Mato Grosso; *X. m. castaneus* Ridgway of Bolivia, southwestern Mato Grosso and northern Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, and northwestern Argentina in the Provinces of Jujuy and Salta, where it intergrades with the nominate subspecies; and *X. m. major* (Vieillot), from Paraguay and Argentina in Chaco, Córdoba, Estero, Formosa, Santa Fé and Santiago (Fig. 1).

X. m. remoratus is similar to the nominate subspecies, having, however, "the pileum and mantle less light, brownish olivaceous (instead of greyish brown), the throat whitish only on the median portion, and not as light as the other, and the underparts less tinged with rusty" (Pinto 1945). *X. m. castaneus* differs from *X. m. major* by the "pileum decidedly darker, russet brown or dusky brown (instead of buffy brown); chestnut of upper parts on average deeper, and lower surface somewhat darker, more rusty cinnamon" (Hellmayr 1925).

While reviewing specimens of *X. major* deposited at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, we found that a series of six specimens from the Province of Tucumán, Argentina, possess much lighter plumage colouration than specimens from nearby localities attributed to the nominate race. We propose that this population be known as

***Xiphocolaptes major estebani* subsp. nov.**

Holotype. American Museum of Natural History, AMNH 524675, adult male collected at Tápia (26°36'S, 65°18'W), Tucumán, Argentina. Collected by L. Dinelli on 14 Sep 1902. Field Number 1847.

Diagnosis. Colours in capitals with numbers in parentheses refer to Smithe (1975, 1981). Similar to *X. m. major* (Vieillot), differing by the plumage in general being much paler, with crown between Light Drab (119C) and Dark Drab (119B), instead of Antique Brown (37); back between Brussels Brown (121B) and Mikado Brown (121C), instead of Raw Sienna (136); feathers of the breast and belly with centres Clay Color (26) and borders Cinnamon (123A), instead of Raw Umber (123) and Antique Brown (37), respectively; tail Russet (34), instead of Warm Sepia (221A).

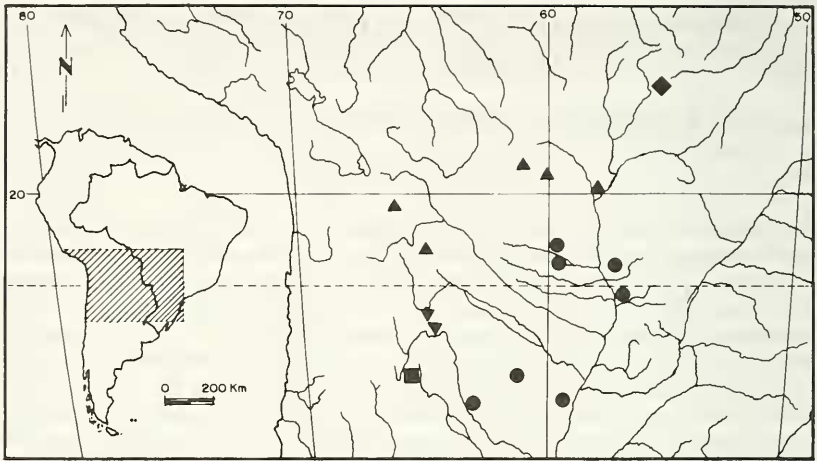


Figure 1. Distribution of the subspecies of *Xiphocolaptes major*. ◆ = *remoratus*; ▲ = *castaneus*; ● = *major*; ■ = *estebani*; ▼ = intergrades between *castaneus* and *major*.

Measurements of the holotype (in mm). Wing ('flat'), 155.0; tail, 109.5; bill (from insertion to tip), 59.5; tarsus, 30.0.

Paratypes. Three males, AMNH 524676, 524677 and 524678, collected by L. Dinelli on 24 Oct 1901 (first two) and 19 Sep 1902 (last); and two females, AMNH 524679 collected by L. Dinelli on 24 Oct 1901, and AMNH 524682 collected by S. Venturi on 8 Jul 1900, all from the type locality.

Distribution. Known from the type locality and Tafi Viejo, Prov. Tucumán, Argentina (*apud* Esteban 1948), and the surrounding region.

Etymology. The subspecific name honours Argentine ornithologist Juan G. Esteban, who was the first to do a complete revision of the Dendrocolaptidae of his country (Esteban 1948).

Comments. *X. m. castaneus* has plumage which is much more reddish than *X. m. major* and *X. m. estebani*. *X. m. remoratus*, based on the original description, is darker than the nominate subspecies (Pinto 1945) and, consequently, than *X. m. estebani*.

The paratypes show uniformity in the diagnostic characters. Two females (AMNH 524679 and 524682) have very indistinct transverse black bars on the abdomen, these being almost absent in 524682. The other specimens all have well-marked abdominal bars. Comparative measurements of *X. m. major*, *X. m. castaneus* and the newly proposed subspecies are presented in Table 1. The observed differences in measurements were not statistically significant for any character, perhaps in part because of the small sample sizes.

A single male (AMNH 524680), also labelled from the type locality and supposedly collected together with female paratype AMNH 524682 by Venturi, is indistinguishable from the nominate subspecies, while another male (AMNH 524681), collected by the same Venturi, labelled

TABLE 1
Comparative measurements (in mm) of three races of *Xiphocolaptes major*. For samples of 5 or more, the first number is the mean, followed by the standard deviation in parentheses

	Wing	Tail	Bill	Tarsus
<i>X. m. major</i>				
7 ♂♂	150.8 (3.8)	107.4 (5.8)	56.7 (1.1)	30.3 (3.1)
12 ♀♀	148.7 (4.2)	110.0 (3.6)	57.5 (1.9)	30.3 (2.2)
<i>X. m. castaneus</i>				
1 ♂	142.0	106.0	—	30.5
2 ♀♀	141.0, 142.0	103.0 (n=1)	52.0, 55.0	28.0, 30.5
<i>X. m. estebani</i>				
5 ♂♂	153.2 (4.0)	109.9 (5.4)	58.2 (1.1)	30.7 (1.9)
2 ♀♀	149.0, 155.0	109.0 (n=1)	59.0, 61.5	30.5, 34.5

from "Ocampo, Chaco" (Villa Ocampo is, in fact, in Santa Fé Province, according to Paynter 1985) is typical of *estebani*. These two specimen labels most certainly were inadvertently exchanged. S. Venturi was an Italian resident in Argentina, whence he sent a bird skin collection of 1115 specimens for sale to the Rothschild Museum in Tring, England. The Venturi collection was made between 1898 and 1906 at diverse localities in the Provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fé, Tucumán and Jujuy (for details, see Hartert & Venturi 1908). Whether the accidental label exchange was made by Venturi or in Tring is unclear.

Acknowledgements

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